

BUILDING LOCAL STC PARTNERSHIPS

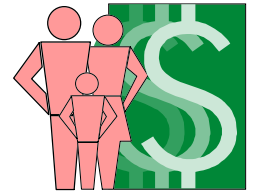


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INTRODUCTION

With the passage of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, states, regions, and individual school districts who wanted to participate in the development of a School-to-Careers system found themselves looking to build partnerships with individuals, agencies, and organizations with whom they had never worked. It took this country most of the 1980s and part of the 1990s to identify and to begin repairing the disconnect between the nation’s schools and business/industry. During this time, it became readily apparent that, in order for students to prepare more appropriately for the workforce and further educational opportunities, education and business/industry/labor had to work more closely together. While this seems like a common sense approach, the fact is that two years after the enactment of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, many areas and regions are still struggling to develop, implement, and sustain true, meaningful relationships with the private sector. On the surface, it seems that building business/education partnership would be relatively easy because each side has so much to gain from this collaboration, but, when it comes to deciding each partner’s responsibilities, each partner’s role, and methods for implementation, the task becomes much more difficult.

The purpose of this section is to assist you and your local partnership in designing, developing, implementing, and sustaining a meaningful partnership with everyone involved with the School-to-Careers partnership. This task is not easy and cannot be done quickly. Once a quality partnership is established, it will take time and dedication to sustain it. This section contains information and tools you will find helpful as you organize, design, implement, and sustain your local School-to-Careers partnership.



WHY SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIPS?

A partnership is an agreement between a business, labor, government, or community organization and an educational institution to work together on activities that will better prepare students for the workplace and lead to the development of a highly skilled workforce.

THE NEED TO FORM BUSINESS—EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Business, labor, government, and community groups must form partnerships with education for dramatic changes to occur in the quality of this country's workforce. Education cannot respond to the changing needs of students who are preparing for life beyond formal education without the commitment and assistance of business, labor, government, and community groups. Due to shrinking budgets, resources are at a premium, and groups must share them. Organizations outside the education arena bring a much needed global perspective as plans are made to transform our schools. Business, labor, government, and community organizations that enter into partnerships with education have the opportunity to shape the future workforce, to reduce costs involved in training for remediation, and to create a positive image in the community.

DETERMINING THE NEED FOR A LOCAL SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP

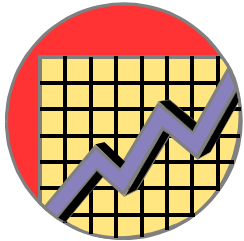
To form a local School-to-Careers partnership, you may need to work initially with a small group of concerned constituents that already see the need for a partnership but realize that additional members will be necessary if the partnership is to gain recognition and credibility in the local geographic area. To assist you with this step of the partnership- building process, the activity on the next page will provide you with a place to start.

BENEFITS OF A LOCAL SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP

Most School-to-Careers partnerships produce a win—win situation for everyone involved. Specifically, involvement in a local School-to-Careers partnership can produce the following benefits:

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/LABOR

- Develops a higher skilled entry-level employee, and ultimately provides access to an expanded pool of applicants with adequate technical and work-readiness skills.
- Aids regional economic stability because of access to a more highly skilled workforce.
- Reduces the amount of resources spent on company-sponsored training and development activities for its employees.
- Produces a positive company image.
- Allows input on curriculum used in local schools.





CASTING THE FOUNDATION FOR A LOCAL SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP



1. Why does your area need a School-to-Careers Partnership?

2. In what ways can the private sector contribute to the success of the School-to-Careers Partnership?

3. In what ways can educational institutions contribute to the success of the School-to-Careers Partnership?

4. If a School-to-Careers partnership were formed, what would be the best way to govern and administer the partnership?

5. Create a list of all potential groups, agencies, individuals, businesses, community-based organizations, etc. that need to become involved with the local School-to-Careers partnership:





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- Provides an effective tool for evaluating the qualification of prospective employees.
- Enhances the pride and self-esteem of current employees resulting from their mentoring of students.

EDUCATION

- Provides a real-world link for students so that they understand why they are learning what they are learning.
- Allows students to showcase their skills and abilities to potential employers.
- Provides students with the opportunity to explore career interests and experiment with potential career choices in the actual workplace.
- Allows students to obtain advanced standing in a variety of postsecondary educational institutions.
- Gives students actual work experience in their chosen career pathway, which creates an advantage for them when pursuing further education and when seeking employment.
- Educators gain access to state-of-the-art technology and equipment through their interaction with business/industry.
- Students have the opportunity to develop relationships with mentors, and these connections make learning more enjoyable and more challenging.

THE SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP

- Assists in identifying and clarifying the roles of other partners.
- Helps market the School-to-Careers concept to additional employers.
- Increases the partnership's credibility and influence.
- Creates a sense of "ownership" for everyone involved in the School-to-Careers initiative.
- Validates the employer's commitment and ultimately leads to greater, more substantial support from the employer.
- Encourages employers to become School-to-Careers advocates through their involvement in the development of the local partnership.

DETERMINING THE MAKE-UP OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Once you have broad-based support for the creation of a partnership, the next step is to determine who should actually become part of it. The composition of your local partnership is critical if you want serious recognition in your geographic area and; ultimately, if you seek to sustain the partnership. The exercise on the next page is designed to provide direction in the partnership development process.

If the local partnership intends to participate in any of the federal School-to-Careers programs, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act has some specific requirements for putting together the local partnership. The most significant of these requirements pertains to membership. The chart



DETERMINING PARTNERS



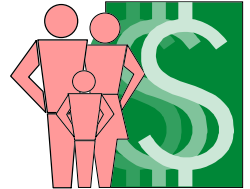
1. What successful partnerships currently exist upon which you can build?

2. Should you consider forming the School-to-Careers partnership from a completely new core of interested parties?

3. Since the local School-to-Careers partnership cannot include every possible organization and entity, how will the partnership ensure that the views of those who are not represented are reflected in the partnership's goals and objectives.

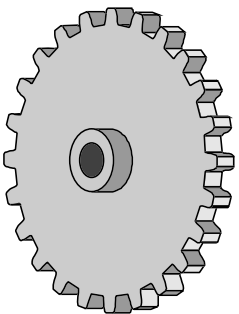
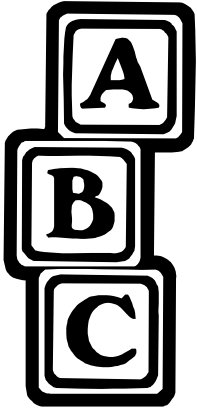
4. Considering the geographic area the partnership will cover, what special considerations will this require when designing the local School-to-Careers partnership?

5. Of those who are members of the local School-to-Careers partnership, which ones would make a good choice for a fiscal agent?



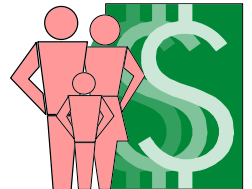
SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP MEMBER GRID

Membership Categories	Potential Members	Recruited Members
Labor Organizations	_____	_____
Corporate Business	_____	_____
Small Business	_____	_____
School Administrator	_____	_____
School Board	_____	_____
Postsecondary Representative	_____	_____
Secondary Representative	_____	_____
Counselor	_____	_____
Government	_____	_____



SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP MEMBER GRID

Membership Categories	Potential Members	Recruited Members
Parent Organizations	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Student Organizations	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Media	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Private Industry Councils	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Community-Based Organizations	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Proprietary Educational Institutions	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Vocational Student Organizations	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Other	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
Other	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____



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below provides a list of the required membership categories for a partnership sustained with federal monies. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act does not necessarily mandate that one representative from each area become a member, but that each of these constituencies must have representation. One person may represent two or more categories on this list. If the federal guidelines are used to design your local partnership, you may add any additional membership categories you feel are necessary to create a functional partnership. If you look at partnerships across the country, you will see that a “magic number” of people or categories does not exist. The exact composition of each local partnership will probably vary from area to area. The key is to build a partnership that will work for your own particular geographic area or region.

DESIGNING A COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP

Once the partnership’s make-up is determined, the next major task is to put together a strategic plan to implement School-to-Careers activities in your regional area. A key element in developing a successful, functioning plan for your School-to-Careers initiative is significant collaboration between all partners. On the surface, collaboration seems like a simple task, but,

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES FOR LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- ✓ Employers or Employer Organizations
- ✓ Secondary & Postsecondary Institutions
- ✓ Students
- ✓ Labor Organizations
- ✓ Nonmanagerial Employee Representatives
- ✓ Community-Based Organizations
- ✓ National Trade Organizations at the Local Level
- ✓ Industrial Extension Centers
- ✓ Rehabilitation Agencies
- ✓ Registered Apprenticeship Agencies
- ✓ Local Vocational Education Entities
- ✓ Proprietary Educational Institutions
- ✓ Local Government Agencies
- ✓ Parent Organizations
- ✓ Teacher Organizations
- ✓ Vocational Student Organizations
- ✓ Private Industry Councils
- ✓ Indian Tribes
- ✓ Indian Organizations
- ✓ Alaska Native Villages
- ✓ Native Hawaiians



FORMING A LOCAL SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP



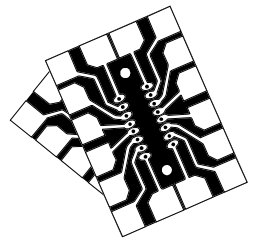
1. After reviewing the partners required by the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, identify any necessary additions.

2. What are the benefits that will be gained from forming this partnership?

3. What kind of structure will be used to govern and administer the local School-to-Careers partnership?

4. Who will design, plan, implement, and evaluate the local School-to-Careers Partnership?

5. What other process- and structure-oriented details need to be clarified so that everyone is comfortable with the composition, make-up, and operation of the partnership?



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when it comes time to actually make important decisions, especially those that involve allocation of money, tension may develop among members. Collaboration can be defined in many ways. In Webster's Dictionary, you will find two definitions of collaboration: (1) to work together, especially in literary or scientific work, or (2) to cooperate with the enemy. Are we suggesting that you will actually work with your enemies? No, not really, but you will work with people, entities, organizations, and agencies that you probably have never worked with before. Perhaps a better definition of collaboration comes from Barbara Gray in "Collaboration: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems."

Regardless of how you define collaboration, it will not be easy and will require constant attention if you wish to maintain it throughout the existence of the local partnership.

Another important part of the local School-to-Careers partnership is how to establish the agenda and overall School-to-Careers plan and who will drive the agenda. Here, we simply offer advice based upon our experiences in many other states. In many situations we have encountered, the agenda and overall plan for School-to-Careers is driven by the education

COLLABORATION

"Collaboration is the process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of the domain. Five key aspects of this definition are: (1) Stakeholders are interdependent; (2) Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences; (3) Joint ownership of decisions is involved; (4) Stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain; and (5) Collaboration is an emergent process."

sector because the impetus for School-to-Careers comes primarily from the State Department of Education to local education agencies. While it is understood that, in most instances, some organization or entity must initially take a leadership role, the longevity and overall success of the School-to-Careers partnership will depend upon a collaborative relationship. In other words, no one entity or organization can drive the agenda, which must be formed through a collaborative, consensus-building approach.

Your local partnership's success will be based, in large part, upon the process used to develop an overall School-to-Careers plan. Use the activity on the previous page to help you determine baseline information necessary to develop a collaborative partnership plan. You will need to take many different things into consideration, such as national, state, regional, and local issues, financial considerations, students, parents, educational institutions, business/industry/labor,



DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR YOUR SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP



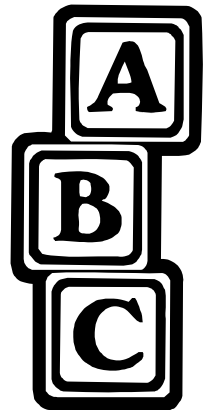
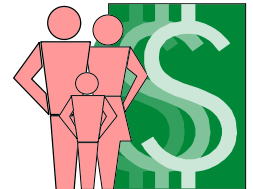
1. What are your expectations for the local School-to-Careers partnership?

2. What barriers will the partnership encounter in implementing its School-to-Careers plan?

3. List five goals you think the partnership should strive for over the next year, and five by the end of the partnership's third year of existence.

4. Develop an outline of a one-year strategic plan for the local School-to-Careers Partnership:

5. List any additional considerations for the development of an overall strategic plan for the local School-to-Careers Partnership:



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community-based organizations, and many others unique to your locality. The following checklist may be helpful in organizing a successful partnership:

- The initial steps you take in the formation of the partnership are critical. They will take time and cannot be hurried.
- Create and develop a partnership vision that is broad, a mission that is practical, and measurable goals that encourage long-range planning.
- Encourage partnership members to become better acquainted—this will help focus the partnership’s energies and to clarify its direction.
- To aid the planning process, use an independent expert facilitator.
- Determine actions based on the partnership’s goals.
- Before implementation occurs, ensure that evaluation measures are developed and that they relate to the partnership’s goals.
- Use focus groups, surveys, and invitations to meetings to solicit input from other regional constituents on the development of your plan.
- Develop a prioritized list of partnership activities, with a specific timeline for each of the activities.
- Organize partnership activities into manageable phases that will make results easier to obtain.
- Resist the urge to design activities based totally on past practices. Be a part of the solution, not the problem, and, when new ideas or approaches are suggested, say “What if.”

NEXT STEPS FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

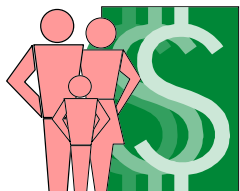
Once the partnership is established and a plan is in development, the partnership must start activities as soon as possible. The following lists should provide you with some ideas to get you started in providing assistance to everyone interested in School-to-Careers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:

- Organize joint professional development opportunities on topics of interest to all members of the School-to-Careers partnership.
- Provide professional development as an ongoing function of the local partnership.
- Provide an environment where participants can practice skills in a non-threatening environment.

SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES:

- Use guest speakers from business, labor, government, and the community at student and faculty activities.
- Organize career fairs, career days, etc. where members of the partnership talk to students about opportunities at available worksites.
- Offer opportunities for business, labor, government, and community personnel to learn more about the teaching profession, with a chance to practice instructional skills in the classroom.



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WORK-BASED ACTIVITIES:

- Provide mentoring opportunities for teachers and students.
- Organize job shadowing opportunities for teachers and students.
- Arrange long-term and short-term internships for teachers and instructors.
- Develop a database of employer contacts that allows for the crossing of educational, institution, districts, and boundaries.
- Create an electronic database of employers willing to offer opportunities to students and instructors at the worksite. Students, instructors, and counselors would access this database via computer at their locations.
- Develop employer “yellow pages,” including types of jobs, size of the organization, addresses, and telephone numbers to help locate worksites for students and instructors.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:

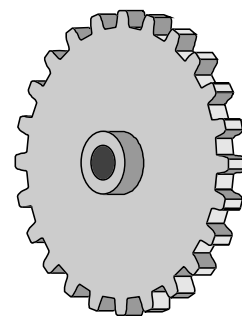
- When designing work-based learning activities, use the SCANS competencies and foundation skills as a basis for your curriculum development.
- Ensure curriculum development incorporates applied and contextual learning methodologies and approaches so that students see the importance as well as the relevance of their structured education.
- Create the curriculum around broad career clusters or pathways so that career experimentation or testing by students does not result in duplication or loss of credit if a student changes his or her mind.

MARKETING ACTIVITIES:

- Organize discussion forums throughout the regional area and invite all stakeholders to participate.
- Create a video that shows the different aspects and benefits of the partnership.
- Develop promotional materials that emphasize outcomes of importance to each specific audience.
- Design marketing materials with a style, reading level, and format that appeals to your target audience.
- Use students in various marketing activities.

FUNDING ACTIVITIES:

- Provide an itemized accounting of income and expenditures on a monthly basis for all interested parties.
- Determine a fiscal agent for the School-to-Careers partnership and establish acceptable accounting procedures to ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal accounting principles.
- Ensure partners share funding and resource allocation responsibilities.
- If desired, establish the School-to-Careers partnership as a separate entity, with its own budget, schedule, faculty, and staff.



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- Develop a plan for identifying and pursuing additional funding resources relevant to the School-to-Careers partnership's goals and mission.

PARTNERSHIP COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES:

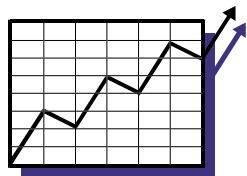
- Ensure that an effective communication process is established between all the "players" in the School-to-Careers partnership.
- Maintain records of all meetings and partnership agreements and share these with those planning and implementing the partnership.

EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP

One of the most overlooked elements of School-to-Careers partnerships is an evaluation component. The only way you will ever know whether or not you have made a difference will be through periodic evaluations and assessments of the activities conducted by your local partnership. Developing evaluation and assessment measures is often a mundane task, which is probably why they are often neglected. In the end, if your local partnership desires to maintain and sustain its work for an extended period of time, you will need an evaluation plan for collecting information to assist you in justifying the continuance of your School-to-Careers system.

Because of the School-to-Careers system's complexity, it is conceivable that you could design evaluation and assessment procedures so burdensome that no one would complete them. Therefore, the secret is to make the evaluation and assessment process as painless as possible, yet comprehensive enough to ensure that all necessary data is collected. The following checklist should help you in planning the evaluation component for your local partnership:

- Develop an evaluation and assessment strategy and plan as part of your partnership's overall system. The strategies must use measures based on the partnership's goals.
- If most members of your local partnership lack the necessary skills to plan or conduct the evaluation and assessment strategy, consider contracting with a third party.
- To eliminate the burdensome nature of evaluation and assessment, utilize currently existing system elements for collecting this type of data, such as: (1) achievement tests; (2) student grades; (3) student demographics; (4) attendance records; and (5) any other student information currently available.
- Keep detailed and accurate depictions of all planning, design, and implementation activities in which the partnership is involved.
- Develop evaluation and assessment measures for both the product and the process of the partnership.
- Use both formative and summative evaluation techniques (i.e., ongoing evaluation and evaluation at the end of each phase of the partnership).





DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR YOUR SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP



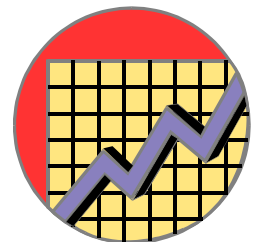
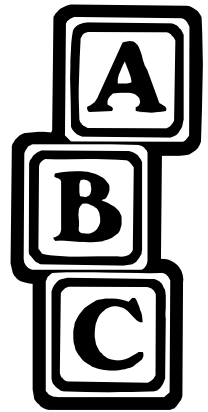
1. How will you measure process and product of your local School-to-Careers system?

2. What kind of qualitative and quantitative strategies will you use to measure the effectiveness of your local School-to-Careers partnership?

3. How will you determine whether the results obtained by the School-to-Careers partnership are justified by the resources invested?

4. How will you utilize the results of your School-to-Careers partnership's evaluations and assessment to make continuous quality improvements?

5. How will you obtain feedback from students, employers, educators, parents, etc. about how the School-to-Careers system has impacted them?



SUSTAINING THE LOCAL SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIP

Ultimately, the partnership's goal should be to elicit a long-term commitment from everyone involved. This will require a constant examination of where you were, where you are now, and where you want to go. To achieve this goal while maintaining and sustaining the local partnership, a variety of activities will need to be carried out. The following suggested list of activities should assist you in sustaining your local School-to-Careers partnership over time:

SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP:

- Credit all members of the School-to-Careers partnership for successes.
- Use banquets, informal gatherings, and press conferences to celebrate the partnership's accomplishments.
- Ensure that appropriate mechanisms for communication, problem solving, planning, and evaluation are in place.
- Constantly revise your partnership plan and make necessary adjustments to reflect critical changes.
- Set meetings and communicate on a regular basis.
- On an annual basis change members to promote the exchange of fresh ideas and to give existing members a rest from the partnership's constant activity of the local School-to-Careers partnership.
- Involve parents in all aspects of the School-to-Careers partnership.
- Create a partnership that is mutually beneficial to everyone involved with the School-to-Careers initiative.

Your local School-to-Careers partnership will no doubt experience ups and downs throughout its existence. As long as the partnership continues to create more opportunities for all students in your geographic area, you will know that you are moving in the right direction.

CREATING SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS SYSTEMS IN A RURAL ENVIRONMENT

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act provides a framework for building statewide systems to improve students' transition from school to the workplace. Building a School-to-Careers system that serves all students entails working with school systems in diverse geographic areas, each with their own strengths and challenges. Rural communities and schools occupy an important position in the effort to link school and work and to expand economic opportunities for all students. Rural populations are found in every state, and they make up over forty percent of our nation's workforce. School-to-Careers systems can help to sustain the vital contribution of these communities and their schools to the nation's economy.

Rural communities face significant economic and demographic challenges. Shifting employment patterns in the global economy have caused significant levels of poverty in rural areas, and many rural schools have a limited capacity to adapt to the changing economy. The economies of rural communities are often focused on one industry, such as manufacturing or farming, and individuals who are not interested in those careers may have limited choice in career paths and



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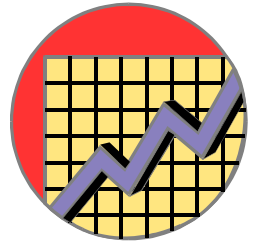
1. What processes and procedures will the School-to-Careers partnership develop to ensure that, over time, the partnership will maintain a strong leadership base?

2. What indicators or benchmarks will be established to determine over time that the School-to-Careers partnership and system have become institutionalized?

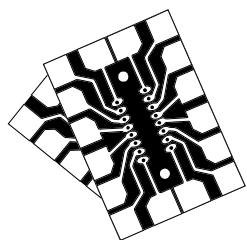
3. What strategies will the partnership develop to recognize internally and externally the work, commitment, and accomplishments of those involved with the School-to-Careers partnership?

4. In what ways are the School-to-Careers partnership's strategies tied to regional economic strategies?

5. What is the local School-to-Careers partnership doing to ensure adequate resources are available to support the partnership in the future?



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opportunities for work-based learning experiences. As a result, they often leave their communities upon completing high school or college and move to areas with more job opportunities. In addition to the economic challenges facing rural communities, geographic isolation and limited educational resources pose a problem in building School-to-Careers systems. Students may have a difficult time researching or obtaining information for class or career development activities due to limited library resources.

In response to these challenges, practitioners have identified the following strategies for building effective School-to-Careers systems in rural areas. Additional resources and organizations follow these strategies, providing further information that can assist in the design and implementation of School-to-Careers systems in rural communities.

STRATEGIES FOR RURAL SCHOOL-TO-CAREERS PARTNERSHIPS



In many rural communities, students often think their only pathway to success is to leave their communities upon completing their education. Rural School-to-Careers partnerships can show students and their families that ample opportunities for success exist in their own communities and that School-to-Careers can help develop these opportunities. In addition, incorporating School-to-Careers principles as early as kindergarten and elementary school helps students to develop a sense of responsibility, confidence, and teamwork at an early age and promotes awareness of a broad range of careers.

Helping students to identify and explore educational and economic opportunities in the community is key. If students are trained and prepared for existing or potential occupations in their communities, they will be more likely to remain, instead of leaving for jobs elsewhere. School-to-Careers systems can help students and community leaders identify the existing and potential opportunities for economic growth and work-based learning experiences by undertaking an analysis of community strengths and needs. Students and community leaders can identify opportunities for improving existing businesses; for entrepreneurship and small business development; and for public sector jobs and community service initiatives that can provide a variety of work-based learning experiences. In this process, students learn how to make practical use of data collection and analysis while building knowledge of the community. School-to-Careers systems can prepare them to take advantage of these opportunities by fulfilling their educational needs and increasing the community's potential for economic development.

Many rural School-to-Careers initiatives emphasize the effectiveness of entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. The community analysis described earlier can help students identify and establish businesses that actually create jobs and meet community needs. Learning how to establish and to run a business provides immediate relevance to students' school experience, creates additional economic activity in a community, and develops a lifelong skill that will continue to result in benefits. However, these school-based entrepreneurial activities must supplement, rather than threaten, established local businesses. Competition between area businesses and student-run subsidized businesses can create animosity and damage school-community relations.



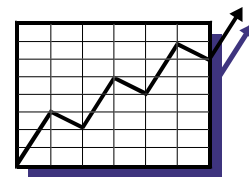
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Rural School-to-Careers partnerships also can utilize community service learning experiences in the work-based learning component. Service learning projects help meet community needs and provide students with hands-on learning experiences that allow them to use the academic skills developed in the classroom. For example, environmental projects provide students an opportunity to develop and to apply their knowledge of math, science, environmental studies, and civics while promoting a sense of responsibility for the environment and return to the community.



Many rural School-to-Careers initiatives emphasize the critical role of technology in assisting rural partnerships to prepare students for lifelong learning and success. Technology helps rural communities overcome their geographic isolation by providing them with access to information from all over the world. As a result, the effective use of technology “evens the playing field” between rural and urban or suburban communities by ensuring that students in rural areas have equal access to a wealth of information and opportunities. Through the Internet, students have obtained not only expanded research capabilities, but also assistance from educators and professionals throughout the world. Many schools have helped students design and develop their own home pages, or the school home page, providing an opportunity for students to learn a marketable skill while in school. Other technologies available for rural schools include: distance learning and telecommunication technologies, e-mail, interactive television, electronic bulletin boards, and other information networks.

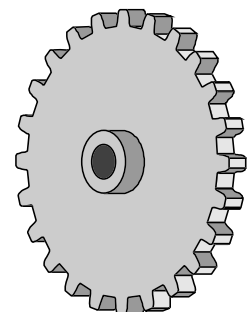
Networks among rural schools can help synthesize and disseminate information and methods of building School-to-Careers partnerships in rural areas. Newsletters, conference calls, and electronic bulletin boards can facilitate the formation of networks among rural schools. Organizations such as the National Rural and Small Schools Network and the National Rural Education Association provide educators, administrators, and staff an opportunity to exchange information with other small and rural schools.



“BEST PRACTICES”

In Rothsay, Minnesota, a community’s drive to save its independent school system and its business spurred the school board to purchase and reopen the closed hardware store, replacing the high school’s business simulation class with the opportunity to run a real business. The hardware store is a profit-making enterprise that engages students in all aspects of its operations. A business teacher oversees operations and serves as the store’s general manager.

Seniors can work in the hardware store one school period each weekday for academic credit. The students rotate among jobs, building skills in database management, spreadsheet applications, accounting, payroll, inventory, and marketing. These work-based experiences are linked to school-based learning through accounting and business management classes. Student learning in the workplace is measured in two formal ways. At least once each quarter, students take a written exam addressing basic questions about store operations, such as preparation of purchase orders and daily accounting procedures. In addition, the instructor completes a ten-



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item weekly evaluation for each student on such items as appearance, cooperation, and respect. Students rate themselves on the same form in consultation with the teacher. In addition to their success with the hardware store, a student-run corporation, Tiger, Inc., has taken over operations of the town's only grocery store, and students have worked with Habitat for Humanity and private investors to build several houses in the area, providing additional avenues for students to experience entrepreneurship and leadership.

REAL Enterprises is a non-profit organization formed to help rural schools create innovative entrepreneurship education programs. REAL provides technical assistance, training, and other support services to help teachers offer entrepreneurship programs to students. A REAL initiative operating in four Oklahoma panhandle high schools—Forgan, Beaver, Balko, and Turpin—uses interactive technology to simultaneously transmit the REAL entrepreneurial class over fiber-optic lines to each of the other three schools. The teacher of the entrepreneurial class spends a day in each of the schools instructing and transmitting from that site. Class paperwork, including tests and required business plans developed by students, are sent to the teacher via fax. In addition to the REAL class, the interactive technology also has allowed the schools to provide arts and language courses that otherwise would not have been available in the four schools.

Students at Rock Creek High School in St. George, Kansas, have utilized the school district's computer systems as a work-based learning opportunity. The district technology specialist trains the students in hardware, troubleshooting, and installation. Students have installed 30 new PCs in the computer lab, including the network, and CD-ROMs on 15 other school computers. The students also maintain the computer system throughout the district by assisting with hardware problems and helping faculty and administrators with software applications. District personnel in need of technical support can contact students through the e-mail system.

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

As you begin to design your School-to-Careers partnership, you may want to consider a number of crosscutting issues. The next few pages will provide a discussion and guidance on how you may want to approach them.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS

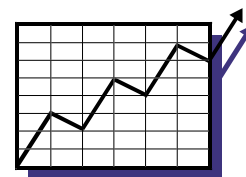
Over the past three years, local partnerships have sprung up in almost all 50 states. Most have taken one of two pathways in forming their local School-to-Careers partnership. The two most common methods of forming local partnerships are: (1) developing a completely new partnership, and (2) forming the partnership from a pre-existing entity. Depending upon various regional factors, the path you choose will, in most cases, not make a significant difference, but some characteristics of each of these pathways warrant further explanation.



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FORMING A NEW LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

For many of the new School-to-Careers partnerships formed around the country, it made more sense to create a completely new entity. Generally, political reasons have resulted in the eradication of an existing organization or entity because many members or interested constituencies would have held pre-conceived ideas of the new partnership's purpose. Because one of the purposes of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act is to repudiate the status quo and formulate an integrated system of workforce preparation, many partnerships found that starting over was the most appropriate way to go. Forming a new partnership also brings everyone in on the same level and does not give some members of the partnership an advantage over others because of previous experience. Lack of experience, however, can also be a disadvantage. Some recently formed School-to-Careers partnerships have had virtually little or no experience coordinating activities between educational entities and the private sector, so they have difficulty deciding where to start.



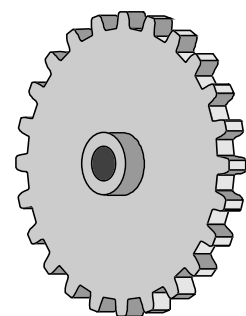
FORMING A PARTNERSHIP FROM A PRE-EXISTING ENTITY

In some areas of the country, time was a significant factor so many local School-to-Careers partnerships chose to form around an already existing entity or organization. Examples of organizations or entities from which other School-to-Careers partnerships have been formed include:

- Chambers of Commerce
- Tech Prep Consortia
- Private Industry Councils
- Vocational Education Consortia
- Local Union Organizations
- Local Workforce Development Boards
- Community Colleges
- High Schools
- Intermediate Educational Agencies
- Economic Development Agencies
- Local Businesses and Industries

Time and experience have shown that these organizations can be used to meet the requirements for a local School-to-Careers partnership. When selecting any one of them, you must remember that School-to-Careers is designed to be a collaborative system. In some areas, the focus of some of these organizations may be too narrow to support the School-to-Careers concept.

The formation of your local School-to-Careers partnership is one of the most important steps you will take in the development process. In making this selection, you will need to look beyond the immediate advantages or disadvantages and determine how your selection will effect the operation of the partnership down the road.



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SELECTING A FISCAL AGENT

Another one of the most difficult tasks that a local School-to-Careers partnership will undertake is the selection of a fiscal agent. Because School-to-Careers is a state-administered program, each local partnership will receive federal dollars from an agency of State government once approved. The local partnership will be accountable to this state agency for the expenditure of School-to-Careers funds. In turn, the state agency is accountable to the federal government for the expenditure of federal School-to-Careers funds. In theory, any entity or organization that has an accounting system based upon generally acceptable accounting principles can become the fiscal agent. Because the original source of funds is the federal government, all School-to-Careers expenditures are governed by strict government accounting procedures and regulations. These regulations are imposed by either the U.S. Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Labor, depending upon which of these departments originated the grant. One logical criteria for selecting an entity or organization as the fiscal agent would be experience in working with the federal government's accounting procedures and regulations.

The selection of a fiscal agent means only that a particular entity or organization will serve as a repository for the local School-to-Careers partnerships funds. The agent must use its standard accounting procedures to receive and to disburse funds for the operation of the local partnership. Determining how funds are allocated and for which activities is a democratic decision made by the entire local School-to-Careers Executive Board. Unfortunately, the fiscal agent selection and designation process has brought about a great deal of tension among developing local School-to-Careers partnerships. The source of this tension stems from the idea that whomever becomes the fiscal agent inherently wields more power than the other members of the local School-to-Careers partnership. Indeed, in numerous local partnerships across the country, power plays and turf wars have become commonplace during the selection of one fiscal agent over another. The U.S. Department of Education has ruled that the designation of a fiscal agent does not automatically impose the fiscal agent's institutional policies and procedures with regard to benefits, salary schedules, etc. Those decisions are determined by the Executive Board of the School-to-Careers partnership. In many instances, the designated fiscal agent has used this opportunity as authority to make funding and allocation decisions based upon institutional policies and procedures, instead of consulting with the School-to-Careers executive board. The most important thing to remember is that the designated fiscal agent has no authority or power to determine allocation and funding priorities. These are the School-to-Careers partnership's decision.

INCORPORATION AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

In many areas, School-to-Careers partnerships were set up under 501(c)(3) under the U.S. Tax Code as non-profit, tax exempt organizations. Your local School-to-Careers partnership may want to consider this process.

